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## EIU Employees Lauded for Service to Nontraditional Students

*Nov-15-2005*

An individual and a campus office have been publicly honored and thanked for their outstanding efforts on behalf of Eastern Illinois University's nontraditional student population.

The event was part of EIU's School of Continuing Education's celebration of National Nontraditional Student Week, held Nov. 7 through 11. Events were held throughout the week to bring focus and attention to Eastern's nontraditional commuting students and their important contribution to the university.

Nontraditional students are simply defined as those students who are 25 years old or older. Nearly 20 percent of Eastern's 12,129 students fall within that range.

Dan Nadler, vice president of student affairs, recognized Karen Hartbank, a faculty member in the department of sociology/anthropology, for her outstanding contributions to nontraditional students.

Staff from the School of Continuing Education said they have received many positive comments about Hartbank, including ones from students who say her classes are "very interesting and that is easy for them to talk to her."

"Hartbank has what it takes to be an extraordinary instructor – knowledge about her field, an understanding of human nature and a genuine concern for others," said Will Hine, dean of the School of Continuing Education. "She is always willing to support her students, co-workers and the university, and has served off-campus non-traditional students of Eastern in many ways."

Hartbank, who has taught at Eastern for 17 years, teaches courses in sociology and has taught a seminar for students interested in prior learning assessment. She also has served as an academic advisor for the bachelor's in general studies degree program.

Nadler also presented Jone Zieren, director of Eastern's Financial Aid Office, an award for her office's many and varied efforts in helping nontraditional students.

According to Hine, the financial aid staff has helped students to obtain federal and state aid in the form of grants and loans. They have "clarified confusing terminology, explained bureaucratic procedures and deciphered intricate FAFSA forms," he said. "In addition, they have given presentations to the OASIS group (an informal support organization for adult students) on several occasions.

"They regularly go above and beyond, and are greatly appreciated by the nontraditional students," Hine concluded.

The awards ceremony, held in the Adult/Commuter Student Lounge located in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union, also included a talk by Gabrielle Martin about her feelings about being a nontraditional student at Eastern, the importance of her obtaining her bachelor's of general studies degree and the centrality of education to success in the world today. Martin, a 2004 graduate, is currently employed as an educational specialist at Carle Clinic.



*Shown, from left to right, are Karen Hartbank, Will Hine and Jone Zieren.*